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SUBJECT: Media Reaction - Op-ed on women in Afghanistan

I. On April 11, the independent liberal Stockholm morning daily "Dagens Nyheter" published a signed op-ed by Lisa Bjurwald 'Afghanistan: The war against women is increasing':

"American Vice President Joe Biden pointed out that the presence by the United States in Afghanistan is not about maintaining human rights, but about defeating the Taliban and the terrorist network al-Qaida. Of course it is despicable that the government is considering the legislation [that would legalize rape within marriage], said Biden this week, but meant that the United States gets equally upset over oppression in, for example, China....

"Biden is correct that the change should come from within, but misses that the fate of women is directly connected to the fate of Afghanistan. It is therefore important that aid organizations that focus on women get to have part of the funding and that it does not only go towards military operations. The United States special envoy, Richard Holbrooke says he is 'deeply dissatisfied' with the lack of knowledge about the Taliban among the United States and its allies, which has been placed in the background when the intelligence efforts have been focused on Iraq....

"It would promote both the civilian and military struggle against fundamentalism."

SILVERMAN